

NSC BRIEFING 6 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ 22 DECEMBER 1955

BACKGROUND--MAKEUP OF SUPREME SOVIET

- I. Supreme Soviet of the USSR is composed of 1,347 members, divided into two houses of legally equal status:
 - A. "Soviet of the Union"--708 members--
based on overall population: one deputy for each 300,000 inhabitants of USSR.
 - B. "Soviet of Nationalities"--639 members--
~~by nationality~~ ^{REGIONAL} in representation: 25 deputies from each of 16 "constituent republics", 11 deputies from each of 16 "autonomous republics", 5 deputies from each of 9 "autonomous regions", 1 deputy from each of 10 "national areas", plus 8 deputies from "military units abroad".
- . Members are elected every four years (last election: May '54).
 - A. Elections, formally, are on basis universal suffrage and secret ballot.
 - B. Actually, only one candidate for each position from above--is present.

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II. Unreconciled disagreements within the Party Presidium on either the budget or foreign policy could be the reason for the postponement and, in this connection, the resolution of such possible disagreements might be followed by important changes in the Party hierarchy.

A. However, if any Presidium members are in trouble (maybe Molotov, about whom there are persistent rumors) it would more logical to delay any shifts until the 20th meeting of the Party Congress in mid-Feb '56.

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